

The Country School

in Non-English Speaking
Communities
in Saskatchewan

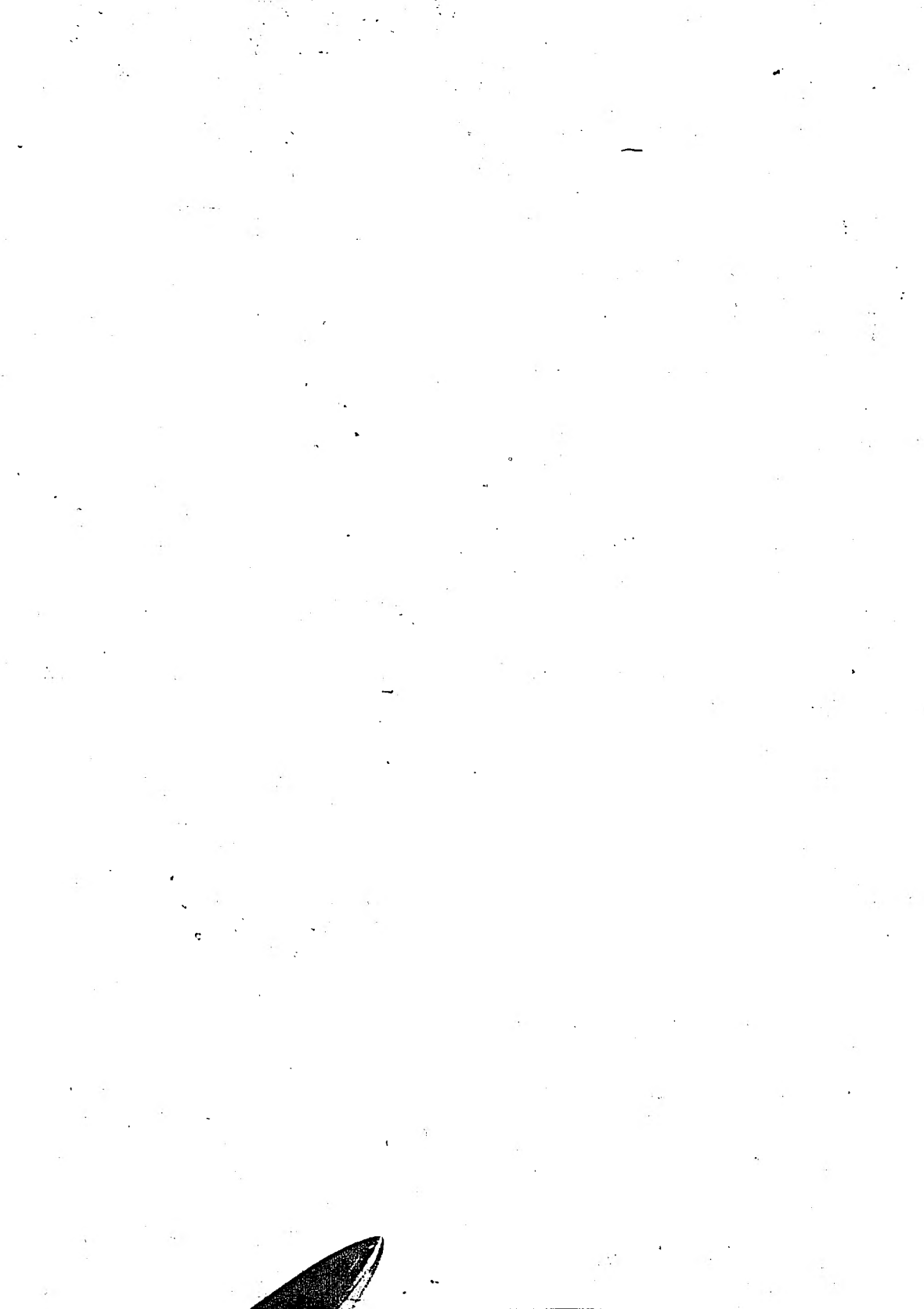


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The Country School

in Non-English Speaking Communities

By PRINCIPAL EDMUND H. OLIVER

MY subject is the Country School in Non-English speaking Communities. From long usage and want I find that I can best develop my theme and delimit the extent of hopeless floundering beyond the circumference of my subject, if I choose a text. You will find my text in the Book of the Department of Education for the year 1913, page 108, last sentence. In discussing the course of study for public schools the statement is made—"Every effort should be made to furnish the child with such ideas and trend of action as will assist in making him an intelligent and patriotic citizen." I should have liked to make one or two emendations in this text, but shall confine my higher critical propensities to one single change—the addition of the word "language." Expressed in the baldest manner possible my theme is—"The citizenship of our country and the interests of our citizens themselves, both now and in the future, alike demand that every pupil in this Province shall receive an adequate education and a thorough knowledge of the English language." I am going to make one hypothesis—for which in future I hope to be held guiltless—I am going to assume that the curriculum of our public schools is not only ideal, but also—a very different proposition—in spite of its city-made books and town-trained teachers, peculiarly suited to the needs of country schools. Entirely apart from the question of reforming the course of study for elementary schools, which is a great matter in itself, I want to ask, "Do the conditions in the country schools in Non-English speaking communities in this Province make for good citizenship?"

An Ontario Country School

I claim to speak with some measure of authority upon the subject of the Country School. I myself am a graduate of that honourable but unpretentious institution. Of all my Alma Maters it is the first and dearest. That little red building on the Seventh Concession and the Caledonia Road did for me more than all other schools, colleges and universities succeeded in accomplishing. To this day when I want to remember whether the East is on my left hand or my right when I face the North my mind leaps across all barriers of distance and time and I find myself a pudgy little school boy in old Chatham township looking at a superannuated map high above the blackboard with the words 'North West Territories' on the left hand side of Hudson Bay. It mattered little that our school was so placed that West on this map was actually East according to the compass. Everyone of us could correct this by watching the sun set in Tom Cochrane's bush. The point is that yon old school map fastened near the ceiling with pulleys and rope which only the teacher and certain older boys specially designated dared to touch, still determines directions for me in my life. It is only just to add that in many respects that humble little school determined for me the direction of my life. That is why, when I visited it a year ago I took off my hat when I entered its humble doors. That is why, as the French would say, I salute with grateful homage, every little school upon these plains. Those little schools are determining the direction of all future citizenship.

First Lessons

That was a great school of ours. I

still look back with reverential awe at that big dictionary and a wonderful volume called the *Gazeteer*. In that Golden Age there were no vacuum cleaners for slates. Nor was our salivary genius exhausted on slates, as the wads of paper on the ceiling bore ample testimony. I recall, too, how in arithmetic we wall-papered infinite rooms, everyone with borders, and always with windows and doors to be allowed for in the calculation. When we had satisfactorily qualified as mural decorators we began to locate the exact moment and point when trains would collide. These trains always travelled from A. to B. and never by any chance went at the same rate of speed, nor, so far as I ever learned, was there a single instance where the collision was averted by ingenuity of operator or bravery of brakeman. I suppose this equipped me as a Principal of a Theological College, though up to the present I have never been able to purchase wall paper, nor have I figured in a collision more serious than the bust-up of Dock Yak's automobile. But I did learn many marvellous things—the islands of the Baltic Sea, the Provisions of Oxford, the definition of a preposition, the counties and county towns along every one of the lakes which Providence—to plague young school boys—had scattered in such profusion around the edges of the Province of Ontario. I knew the names and sins and the manner of the taking off of Henry VIII's six wives. I could tell what English statesmen were in the Cabal. I knew which English King had said, "Will none of the cowards who eat my bread rid me of this turbulent priest?" I could say the Latin word from which Plantagenet was derived and the French nickname for Richard I. I could recite the States of the American Union as far West as the Mississippi and the countries and capitals of Europe as far East as the Eastern Question—our school map antedated the Berlin Treaty. In Grammar I learned what were meant by Syntax and Prosody. In History I never could remember whether Anglicans or Fenians owned the Clergy Reserves, nor understand why some one did not ascertain whether Calais actually was written on Queen Mary's heart, nor could I make out why people bothered about Nova Scotia if it didn't want to remain in the Confederation.

No Language Problems

There were sixty or more of us in that

school. Not one of us was born more than 3 miles from the school house, except one little French girl whose parents had come from the adjoining township and who spoke English like the rest of us. We were all Scotch and English. With the same exception we were all Presbyterians and all went to Sunday School. None of us—and for that matter few of our parents—had been farther afield than the nearest market town—8 miles away. It was in the post office that social distinctions emerged. Every family took a newspaper—but a few unregenerates, not many, were Tories,—they had belonged to the Established Church—and took the *Chatham Planet* and the *Mail and Empire*. One or two of the families had fathers who were elders of the church. My father was a member of the Township Council. But we were all Canadians as our fathers before us had been. And as they had been farmers, we too expected, and were expected to be. So to equip us for our work in life we read city-made books, were taught by teachers who had been trained in town and studied the chief products of Brazil and Paraguay. But through every avenue we did learn the English language—for this country, the vehicle of social and commercial intercourse, and we did learn to know each other, Canadian boys, later to be Canadian men.

Conditions Made For Success

Such was the old-fashioned country school. And we were old fashioned enough to call it a country school. The word 'rural' didn't reach our neighborhood till long afterwards. Our life was simple, and the educational problem was simple, too. And, I believe, if that breed of good strong-limbed manly fellows down there growing wheat, corn and sugar beets constitute an adequate criterion, I believe that the success of that school was fairly substantial. I am convinced that the conditions that surrounded that school made for success. And by success I mean no lower standard than the making of Canadian citizens. What were some of those surrounding conditions?

(1) The Canadian background of those children's lives.

(2) A duly qualified teacher also thoroughly Canadian.

(3) A continuity of school life and policy at least during the period of from two to three years, and always through-

out the whole of each year.

(4) Efficiency of administration on the part of trustees.

I am aware that even in these respects conditions were not always ideal, but having the subject which I have under consideration in view, I think it was largely these things that differentiated us from the country schools in Non-English speaking communities in this Province. And one other thing I must never forget. That was the free discussion on public matters not always too enlightened or free from prejudice, but still a discussion unrestrained and serious on the part of neighbors at threshing times, at the post office, at school meetings, but most of all, in clumps of two or three sitting on the rail line fence. Ontario owes much of its public life to the rail fence. It remains to be seen what Saskatchewan can evolve from barbed wire.

THE PRAIRIE SCHOOL

I TURN now to the Country School of the Prairies. And may I here sound a note of warning. It is easy to disturb the true perspective when one deals with a special subject. No matter what I may have to say by way of criticism, regarding the administration and conduct of country schools in non-English speaking communities on this province, I want to leave with you what at least is my own conviction that as compared with the things that have been done, the things that ought to have been done and have been left undone, pale into insignificance. I pay my tribute of respect and gratitude to those who from the transfer of these Territories from the Hudson's Bay Company to the Dominion, have been our educational leaders. What a theme for a novelist, the Romance of the Prairie Public School! And when I shall state later that it is the function of our Public Schools to make Canadians, I ask you to remember that the very existence of Public Schools here in the West is due to a national Canadian policy. Without that Canadian policy there had been no transfer of these Territories to the Dominion. We should still have been under the Hudson's Bay Company. And under the regime of the Honourable Adventurers, apart from the churches, there was no educational vision. In March, 1853, a despatch came from the London directors to the Council of Assiniboia disapproving of grants to education totalling for the

whole region west of the Lakes nearly \$650, as being a "misapplication of the public fund." The minutes of Feb. 22, 1866, clearly exhibit the attitude of the council itself towards educational needs—

"The President laid before the Council a petition from the settlers at Point Coupee to the number of 27, representing that, with a view to the instruction of their children, numbering as they state, about 60 in all, they had lately built a school-house, but had not the means of paying a schoolmaster, and they were therefore led to petition the Council for such aid as it might be thought fit to afford. The Council by a majority of votes granted 10 pounds to be payable to the schoolmaster himself. But in granting that sum the Council wished it to be distinctly understood by all concerned that it would not be continued, being given for the present year only, and that it was not to be drawn into a precedent." It is a more splendid record that confronts us after 1870. To the eternal credit of the settlers be it said that they early addressed themselves to the problem of providing for the education of the young. Though the buildings were often crude, the pupils' desks not seldom home-made, and the attendance generally so small as scarcely to seem to warrant the employment of a teacher yet here and there on the wide prairies little school-houses rose to bear testimony that the territorial government kept faith heroically with the settlers and besides serving as a place of instruction for the young, afforded the members of the tiny communities a gathering place for social intercourse, religious worship and the transaction of local business.

"As there is no factor in the national greatness of a country of more importance than its Public Schools, no more powerful lever to turn the tide of immigration, no more potent agent to attract the European settler to make a home here, any expenditure that tends to enlarge and solidify our school system must be most effectual in bringing settlers from the old World to this vast, undeveloped land."

This extract from the first annual report of one of the first inspectors of schools in the North-West Territories indicated clearly the double motive that has prompted the liberal expenditure which has ever characterized our educational policies in the West, the desire not only to afford educational facilities to those already in the country, but also to attract settlers to the country by the

educational advantages afforded. And those settlers have come, I may add, and I desire to emphasize, those settlers have come knowing full well that our schools are to be, if I may again quote from the inspector, "a factor in the national greatness of this country."

Separate Schools Introduced

The educational clause of the N.W.T. Act of 1875 made provision for the existence of separate schools and thus sanctioned the reproduction in the Territories of the system of Ontario and Quebec. The third petition presented to the North-West Council had reference to education. The date was March 9, 1877. Moise Ouellette and Pierre Landry desired a school at St. Laurent. It was, however, not till 1884 that a public school system was established for the Territories. In the scheme provided by the Ordinance of August 6th of that year separate schools constituted an essential element. The erection of school districts proceeded forthwith. In 1884 four were erected—Moose Jaw, Qu'Appelle, Prince Albert and Regina. The first dozen or more of 1885 were—Broadview, Kenlis, Edmonton, St. Andrew's, Colleston, Prince Albert East, Wapella, Moosomin, Saskatoon, Little Pipestone, Montgomery, St. John, Red Deer Hill, St. Catharines, Calgary. After the struggle for responsible government which rendered notable the years 1888—1891, the Territorial Government in 1892 asserted a fuller control of its educational system—

(a) It abolished all special privileges for separate schools and provided a uniform inspection throughout the Territories.

(b) It laid down the principle that all schools should be taught in the English language, but made it "permissible for the board of any district to cause a primary course to be taught in the French language."

A territorial ordinance of 1901 reaffirmed in general these principles. The educational clause that was adopted in the Saskatchewan and Alberta Acts of 1905 safeguarded all rights or privileges which at the passing of these Acts any class of persons possessed with respect to

(a) "Separate schools."

(b) Religious instruction in any public or separate school provided for in chapters 29 and 30 of the Ordinance of 1901.

Development of School System

I shall defer the discussion of the matter

of the French language. I desire at this point simply to indicate the magnificent development of our school system. Statistics are usually dry and not infrequently unreliable. But the school statistics of the prairies constitute an epic. In 1884 there were four school districts; in 1894, 300; in 1904, 917. All this in the N.W. Territories. In 1905 on the creation of the Provinces there were in the Territories 1459 regularly formed school districts: 702 in Assiniboia, 551 in Alberta and 206 in Saskatchewan. In the Province of Saskatchewan alone on Dec. 31, 1913, there were 3,214 Public School, 15 R. C. Separate School and 2 Protestant Separate School Districts.

To have erected a new school district every school day during the first decade of our existence is no mean record. To-day we have enrolled in our public and separate schools well over 100,000 pupils, with about three-fifths of these in country schools. It is my conviction that these schools do contribute in a way that we can scarcely hope to measure to an end we all fondly cherish—the making of Canadian citizens.

Some Observations

Before proceeding to make an analysis of certain conditions in at least some non-English speaking communities I wish to make three observations:

(1) If we desire to reform or amend conditions which it may be found necessary to reform or amend it will be necessary for us to approach the whole subject in the proper temper for reform. It is light, not heat, that we are seeking to generate. We must rise to a national view-point, not sink to the level of political partisanship. The task that confronts us is big enough to require the co-operation of all parties, and, I am free to admit, a common policy on the part of more than one Province. It is a time neither for re-crimination for the past nor for concealment in the present. I beg, therefore, to urge upon the members of this committee that their first duty is not propaganda. It is investigation and study.

(2) The problem that confronts us is one that involves almost the dearest possession of a man's life, his language; and, I fear, the question is not entirely free from religious associations. Let us in our discussions not seek to wound. But let us also remember that the greatest wound of all would be a wound to Canada, her national life. We are citizens of no mean country. Let us seek her good.

Let us approach this language question with an eye single to the good of the future Canadian citizenship of this Province.

(3) The solution of some of our difficulties cannot wait. Even while I speak the trenches of Europe are crimson with blood of our own kin. When the cannon's roar is silenced there will come to pass a new Europe and a new Canada. Europe with war-debts, with crippled and disorganized industries will not be the Europe that but yesterday flaunted the glories of its riches in the face of all the world. If we had a flood of immigration before when Clifford Sifton opened up the sluice gates, now will come an avalanche. The Kaiser will have proved himself to be the best immigration agent Canada ever had. What saved the situation in the years that followed 1897? It was the work accomplished in the Territories in the years 1884-1892 and carried forward in the subsequent decade—the organization of our school-system, the building of railways, the establishment of judicial arrangements, the crushing of the Uprising of 1885 that told the world that this was to be a white man's country, and, above all the gaining of responsible government. There is one issue that remains. Are we to be a homogeneous people on these plains or are we to repeat the tragic sufferings of polyglot Austria? This question must be solved in our elementary schools. And we must solve it now. A few years and it may be too late.

CONDITIONS IN SASKATCHEWAN.

I SHALL now seek to place before you certain conditions that obtain in various portions of this Province.

(1) *The Mennonites*—In this Province there are 3 chief kinds of Mennonites—

- (a) The Old Colonier.
- (b) The Bergthaler Gemeinde.
- (c) The Conferenz Gemeinde.

Only the first of these constitute an educational problem, the adherents of Bishop Wienz, of Neuanlage near Hague, and of Bishop Wiebe, of Springfield near Swift Current. In discussing their relation to the public schools we must bear in mind—

(1) Their claim that the Dominion Government prior to their coming to Manitoba in 1874 promised them their own type of schools.

(2) Some progress has been made in establishing school districts among them,

notably at Wymark.

(3) Their adherence to their schools and their language implies no hostility to the Government as such. It is a matter of religious principle. "I believe," Bishop Wienz said to me, "that the church stays better together when our people know simply one language. We are not against the Government. We pray continually for the Government. Some of our brethren are in school districts. If they are too poor to pay their taxes the rest of us help."

(4) Since the Government investigation into a case of excommunication for sending children to public school they seem not to have practised excommunication for this purpose.

(5) The Newer Mennonites show a high appreciation of education.

In the neighborhood of Warman and Hague there are the following 17 villages each with its private school:

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|---------------|-----------------|
| 1. Ostervich | 10. Gruenthal |
| 2. Kronsthal | 11. Schoenwiese |
| 3. Blumenheim | 12. Gruenfeld |
| 4. Reinland | 13. Neuhorst |
| 5. Neuanlage | 14. Edenburg |
| 6. Rosenfeld | 15. Olgafield |
| 7. Blumenthal | 16. Hochstadt |
| 8. Hochfeld | 17. Reinfeld |
| 9. Chortitz | |

In the district south of Swift Current there are the following 15 villages and communities, each with its private school:

- | | |
|---------------|------------------|
| 1. Rosenhof | 9. Chortitz |
| 2. Rosenfeld | 10. Reinland |
| 3. Reinfeld | 11. Schanzenfeld |
| 4. Rosenbach | 12. Blumenort |
| 5. Rosenort | 13. Schoenwiese |
| 6. Neuendorf | 14. Springfield |
| 7. Blumenthal | 15. Gnadenthal |
| 8. Schoenfeld | |

The first group represents upon a conservative estimate a school population between the ages of 6 and 13 totalling 500; the second group represents 300. That is to say in these two groups we have 800 school children attending schools about which the Government knows nothing officially and in which from one year's end to another's, not one single word of English is ever taught. Not a single teacher knows English well enough to teach if he would. Not a single teacher among the 32 possesses any professional qualifications whatever. One of the brightest and best of these acknowledged to me that none of them were capable of handling a school. I visited 13 of these schools. All have the same type of back-

less seats, the same dazzling light pouring into pupils' eyes from left, right and front, the same absence of maps, pictures and charts. Some have a blackboard 3 feet by 4 feet. One even has two, but some have none. All the pupils pass through the same 4 grades:

1. A. B. C.
2. Catechism.
3. New Testament.
4. Old Testament.

In the forenoon they sing and say their prayers, then study Bible History and practice reading. This consumes the morning hours from 8.30 to 11.30. For 3 hours in the afternoon they work at arithmetic and writing. It is simple, fare, but is all the teacher himself has ever received. Frequently he does not know even Hoch Deutsch well enough for conversation. So through seven years they go from October 15th to seeding and again for one month in summer ignorant of the facts of Canadian history, untouched by the loftiness of Canadian ideals and taught that the English language will only make it easier to lapse into the great world of sin outside the Mennonite communities.

Salaries Not Princely

The salaries of the teachers are not princely. I shall give you a few examples. He always receives a free house and if all the teachers are like John Andreas, master pedagogue of Neuanlage and father of eleven children, they need not only a free house, but a big house. In Oster-vich the teacher receives \$200; in Kron-stahl \$100 and some grain; in Blumen-heim \$30 a month for 6 months and 100 bushels of oats; in Gruenthal 60 bushel of wheat, 60 bushels of oats, 60 bushels of barley and \$80 for the year; in Neuan-lage \$30 a month, free fuel, free tuition for his own children, and a load of hay from each farmer; in Blumenthal \$30 a month, 20 loads of hay and 100 bushels of oats; in Hochfeld which boasts 2 teachers, the principal has free hay, free fuel and \$50 per month, but has to pay his assistant \$20 per month; in Grenfeld \$25 to \$30 per month and 8 load of hay. In the summer the teacher is expected to farm or work out. One has risen to the eminence of being a road boss. Several go with threshing outfits. Nearly all are married and live in one end of the school house.

Too Progressive

In Reinland, last year, they had a teacher belonging to the newer type of Mennon-

ites. He was found to be too progressive and was dismissed. In Gruenthal they have had the same teacher for 8 years. He had received no special training. He could understand English a little but could not speak it. In Rosenfeld the entire village is made up of fathers and sons and sons-in-law and their respective families. The patriarch of that community is its teacher. His daughter-in-law said she thought he was paid a salary. Not all the schools have yards. The ventilation in all but Hochfeld and Chortitz leaves much to be desired. The heating system roasts the little ones near the stove and freezes the larger ones near the windows. Some of the schools are painted and clean, others are unkempt and far from tidy.

I enquired of a farmer at Hochfeld how the cost of maintaining their school was apportioned among them. I was informed that half of the teacher's salary was divided among the farmers at a rate per quarter section. The other half was divided on the basis of the number of children sent to school. Last year he paid \$17.00. Farmers in an adjoining school district paid \$23.

The Unorganised District

The outstanding fact is that here in two communities we have 800 school children between the ages of 6 and 13 who are receiving what no stretch of imagination can designate as an adequate education, who are learning nothing of our literature, our history or our language. Before I ask the question whether this can be allowed to continue, I want to explain how it has been allowed to exist. As I understand our educational system the Government takes cognizance only of organized school districts. It was never contemplated that people would deliberately elect to remain outside of school districts and conspire to remain unorganized. It seems to be necessary for the residents of the locality to take the initiative. The Mennonites have simply refrained from organizing into school districts, and, unless he is so unfortunate as to be included in a school district which others are organizing, no Mennonite pays school taxes. It is the device of the unorganized district that is responsible. Fellow citizens, keep your eye on the unorganized district. It covers more than one irregularity.

I now ask the question, Can this state of things be allowed to continue? This raises a more far-reaching question—What

is the function of a school? I venture to state that the function of our schools must not be to make Mennonites, nor Protestants, nor Roman Catholics, but Canadian citizens. If we accept this, then a more insistent issue is raised—of whom have we as a Province the right to expect that they shall allow their children to receive a training adequate for Canadian citizenship? I say, "Of all without exception." And I say with every emphasis that 800 children near Saskatoon and Swift Current are not receiving it. What could be done immediately? I asked that question of an intelligent Mennonite who had come out from the Old Colonier. His response was: "Leave them with their school buildings for the present. Insist first upon their hiring teachers with Saskatchewan qualifications and upon the teaching of English. Do that for the sake of the children." I leave his reply for your consideration. It contains much wisdom.

FRENCH SCHOOLS

I ALSO visited some schools in French speaking districts. In the time at my disposal this morning I shall not be able to go into full details. I cannot say how prevalent throughout this province is the condition to which I shall refer. It will be sufficient if I allude to one single feature of one afternoon's visit made on the afternoon of August 31st to the schools of Grierson and St. Denis, south of the town of Vonda. I visited Grierson at 1.30 p.m., and was at St. Denis from 2.15 to 3.00 p.m. At Grierson the teacher was speaking French as I entered, all the pupils had French books lying on their desks and the teacher told me he was teaching French. At St. Denis the teacher was speaking French as I entered, all the pupils had French books lying on their desks and the teacher continued to speak and use French during the three-quarters of an hour I visited the school. This teacher had had considerable experience in Manitoba and remarked that she understood that conditions regarding bilingual schools were the same in this province as in Manitoba. She told me that she had to use French altogether in the first 3 grades. She taught English to the other grades in which of course there were scarcely any pupils in the the morning. She taught only French in the afternoon. I found

that there was the greatest difficulty on the part of the more grown up pupils in speaking English. This teacher had a third class Manitoba certificate, but had not as yet for this Province a provisional permit. I want to do ample justice to both these teachers. They both impressed me as being bright and capable. In both schools there was the most perfect order. They both received me courteously. They both spoke English perfectly, much better, for instance, than in the case of another teacher whom I visited the same afternoon. The issue is clear. At a time when the whole matter of our educational system is under discussion, do we contemplate the continuance of conditions such as I have described. In the future is it going to be possible to teach French altogether in the primary grades and French only throughout the afternoon? My own conviction is that this question merges into a still larger question—Are we going to contemplate having our children leave the public schools with an inadequate knowledge of the English language? Personally I have nothing but admiration, and even envy, for the person who can speak French as well as English. But in this west I have nothing but pity and commiseration for the youth who will seek to enter into the active duties of citizenship without an adequate acquaintance with English.

A Peculiar Position

I am aware that many contend that in this Province French occupies a position different to that of German or Ruthenian. Those who support this view rest their case upon the following considerations:

- (a) The historical past.
- (b) The Ordinances of 1892 and 1901.
- (c) Regulations of the Department of Education.
- (d) The ruling of the Attorney-General's Department.

Even if these, separately or together, constituted a complete justification for the special treatment of French—an admission which I am far from making—we must remember that the wording of Premier Scott's invitation to suggest reform is very broad and unrestricted. As I understand that invitation, and we thank him for it, that invitation means—"The Government will consider seriously any suggested reform, provided that such reform is within its competence." Now in the matter of education its competence is very wide. The only restrictions laid upon the Government are laid by Sec. 17

of the Saskatchewan Act. These relate only to separate schools and religious instruction, with neither of which have I anything whatever to do in this present paper. If Premier Scott's invitation means anything—and I have every confidence that it does—it means that the question of languages, not excluding the French, in our schools should come under review.

I see no barrier against considering the matter *de novo*. There is no historical past for French in this province. I am aware that there were French traders, and at an early date French settlers. But we have no French regime to consider as in eastern Canada. There were no educational rights of the French to conserve in these territories in 1870. I know that a move was soon put on foot to secure a school at St. Laurent. I know that more than one church was vitally interested in education, particularly of the Indians. My point is that our whole educational policy, apart from the Saskatchewan Act of 1905, Section 17, is entirely without strings of any kind, and even with that Act there is nothing that would tie us up to any language other than English. French has never been an official language in the Territories nor in Saskatchewan. The nearest approach to French being recognized as such that I have been able to discover is in a minute passed by the Old North West Council at Fort Garry on Sept. 13, 1873—"A committee consisting of the Hon. Messrs. Hamilton and Bannatyne and Mr. Urquhart the Clerk of the Council was appointed with directions to see that all Acts of Council, etc., shall be published in the English, French and Cree languages." French then occupies the same position as Cree. And if the argument from the historical past be resorted to, however strong a case you make out for French, a still stronger case may be made out for Cree. If anyone claims that French antedated the English west of Hudson Bay, it is easy to prove that Cree antedated both. The argument from the historical past thus becomes reduced to an absurdity.*

The Ordinances of 1892 and 1901, together with the regulations of the Department of Education have been the determinative factors in the situation. The relative sections of the Ordinance of 1901 are as follows:

Section 136—"All schools shall be taught in the English language, but it shall be permissible for the Board of any

District to cause a primary course to be taught in the French language."

(2) The Board of any district may subject to the regulations of the Department, employ one or more competent persons to give instruction in any language other than English in the school of the District to all pupils whose parents or guardians have signified a willingness that they should receive the same, but such course of instruction shall not supersede or in any way interfere with the instructions by the teacher in charge of the school as required by the regulations of the Department and this Ordinance.

(37) The Board shall have power to raise such sums of money as may be necessary to pay the salaries of such instructors, and all costs, charges and expenses of such course of instruction shall be collected by the Board by a special rate to be imposed upon the parents or guardians of such pupils as take advantage of the same.† I understand that the Attorney-General's department has ruled that the instruction in French provided for by this Ordinance is not subject to the regulations of the Department of Education.

The Situation Summarized

Let us then briefly sum up the situation in regard to French in our elementary schools:

(1) The French language does occupy a privileged position in our elementary schools as compared with other non-English languages.

(2) That it occupies such a position is due entirely to Legislative enactments on the part of Territorial and Provincial Assemblies, and to departmental regulations.

(3) That it should or should not continue to occupy a privileged position remains with the Legislative Assembly and the people of this province to decide, for the Saskatchewan Act of 1905 placed no restriction upon our competence to deal with the language question.

(4) French is being taught in at least some schools in the Province of Saskatchewan to the detriment of a knowledge of the English language.

GERMAN SCHOOLS

DURING the week of August 23rd, I visited a number of schools in the neighborhood of Humboldt. Let me conduct you through a day's visitation. First you visit the office of the secretary-

* It is the case, of course, that both the Ordinances and the Gazette were for a time printed in French as well as in English. But early in the nineties Premier Haultain, in spite of certain representations from Ottawa, dropped the practice as entailing an unjustifiable and unnecessary expenditure of public money.

treasurer of the municipality and ask to be shown a map of the school districts. When you have examined this you will notice some miles north of the town a considerable area not formed into school districts. You naturally enquire, "What is the reason they have no school districts here? Do they not want schools?" "Oh, yes!" comes the reply, "they have private schools out there." This promises to be an interesting scent and you proceed to the livery barn and convince the owner thereof that at the end of the day you will furnish him \$5.00 out of your privy purse provided he drives you to Fulda, St. Michael's, St. John's Wilmont and St. Henry. For you are anxious to see St. Henry too. It is marked on the map as a school district. Why did they want a school when the others did not? You drive north, say 15 or 16 miles, and reach Fulda. It is rather a fine looking school beside a church. On the school is a cross. You enter and are greeted by the school-mistress. She impressed me as being an exceedingly capable woman, and I think she must be a splendid teacher. She has been there 4 years. She teaches German every morning, except for arithmetic. There are 35 on the roll, all German save two, who are English. Most of them must have been present. Her programme is German in the morning, English in the afternoon. Her home is in Wisconsin. She had been appointed by the trustees and the pastor. I enquire, "Why is there not an organised school district here?" "This district was organised as Epsom, but the parish beat out and organised a parish school." And so there exists a private school teaching German one half of the day. It is the same story 3 miles north at St. Michael's—50 children studying German in the morning, English in the afternoon, with the residents taxing themselves \$10.00 a quarter section. A German with whom I had dinner informed me that there were certain advantages in a private school—

(1) They didn't need to pay the teacher so much.

(2) They could have school just when they wanted it, and were subject to no regulations regarding holidays.

(3) They could teach German all morning.

"Zwanzig Meilen"

Three miles west is St. John's Wilmont. The teacher is from Minnesota. In this school English is taught in the morning, German in the afternoon. The English

books used are the Sadlier Books in the Dominion Catholic Series. This school has 42 on the roll. I asked how far it was to Humboldt. The teacher repeated the question to one of the larger pupils,—"Zwanzig Meilen!" came the answer—for their language and outlook are German. Then late in the afternoon I struck east to St. Henry. I wanted to see why they have insisted upon having a public school. You can see the little school as you drive along the road. The flag-pole, which with its fluttering ensign makes silent conquest of Non-English communities in other districts and wins to Canadian citizenship stood pitcously deserted and bent. The fence was dilapidated, the yard overgrown with weeds. One half mile up the road was a little store and across the road Dead Moose Lake parish school, a fine imposing new structure with, I understand, German speaking teachers, and, recently added, one that could speak English. "How is it," I enquired of the grocer, "that you have two schools?" "We have only one school," he replied. "What about the public school down the road?" "We just gave up using it and sent in word to the secretary-treasurer of the municipality not to collect any taxes." In a word, Mr. Chairman, these good people deorganise a school district and in the very same place erect a private school which inspectors may not enter, and to which regulations regarding language do not extend.

Investigation Needed

Private schools in unorganised districts need to be investigated. Ives 3594 was a private school up to the end of 1914. Last year they had a young girl with grade 8 for teacher—the best teacher they ever had. Down at St. Gregor, now attended from 3196, running now a year as a public school, and from 3163, running now a couple of months, they had a private school for years. The result is that one who is in a position to know declares that the children there are in many cases crippled for life. I would not have you believe that this is simply a matter of religion. I understand, for instance, that the priest at Annaheim came out flatly against establishing private schools in all his territory. And though I do not know him I want to pay him my meed of respect. That whole north country beyond Muenster and Humboldt would have been dotted with private schools teaching German. It is a narrow, nationalist ideal against which we surely must set

ourselves. Under the compulsory clause Ruthenian organisers step in where no schools exist. Is there no machinery for dealing with cases where Germans conspire not to organise school districts in order to evade the law?

I have no idea how many of these private schools exist in the Province. I have indicated that there are 15 at Swift Current, 17 at Warman. Near Humboldt there are Muenster, Fulda, St. Michael's, St. John's Wilmont, Dead Moose Lake, Bonne ma, Donne, Bruno, Leofeld, Bremen. I understand that there are others at Duval, Langenburg, Rhein and at Southey. If this should be correct, though I am in three or four cases subject to correction, it would mean that there are at least 45 private schools and possibly 1,200 school children not under the Department of Education and treating German rather than English as their language of instruction. In over two thirds of these not a single word of English is even taught?

A NON-ENGLISH SPEAKING MUNICIPALITY

I DESIRE to draw your attention to a Rural Municipality in North Eastern Saskatchewan. It has a population of about 5,000, with only one village within its borders. The village contains about 150 souls. The population consists of Bukovinians and Galicians or Ruthenians, Community and Independent Doukhobors, Poles, English and German, with one or two other nationalities only slightly represented. For the greater part of the municipality has been settled from about 13 to 17 years, although the majority of the English-speaking residents came from 7 to 9 years ago. Fully three-quarters of the quarter sections are occupied by resident owners. As one proceeds from the extreme southeast of the municipality it is possible to detect a general improvement in housing, in land, stock, roads, general equipment and amount of acreage broken.

Analysis of 100 Families

Out of 100 families that I examined I found that the nationalities of the heads of the household were:—Bukovinian 53; Galician (Ruthenian) 24; Polish 14; Doukhobor 5; English 3; Roumanian 1. Of the heads of households, 20 could speak English fairly and 40 others just a little; 7 wives fairly and 9 just a little; 58 children, apart from the 3 English families,

could speak with varying degrees of proficiency. Of the heads of households 9 could read English fairly, and 10 just a little; 5 wives could read English a little; and 59 children with varying degrees of proficiency. Of the heads of households 63 could read their native tongue; as also could 36 wives and 61 children. Of the 100 families, 35 took no newspapers whatever; 30 took the Canadian Ruthenian; 15 the Canadian Farmer; 13 the Ranok; 11 the Ukrainian Voice; 10 the Catholic Gazette; 3 the Syuz; 3 the Amerika; 3 took English papers; 1 took another Polish paper; and 1 a Roumanian paper. Among these families I found 5 had organs, 1 had a violin, 3 had phonographs, and 15 had pictures other than calendars on the walls. Scarcely any had received visits during the past year from priests, teachers or doctors. No less than 96 had gardens, 94 had chickens, 18 had ducks, 13 had geese, and 9 had turkeys. The farms were mostly all quarter sections—all but 12. Only about one-third of the land was broken. On the average about 10 acres were under wheat, the balance was usually oats, though 9 had barley in extent from one to 12 acres. Practically all had sufficient implements while 6 had threshing outfits. Until the importation of some high grade stock this last summer no pure bred stock existed within the municipality.

There are only 40 English ratepayers resident within the municipality. Yet out of a council of 7 the Reeve and 2 councillors are English, 3 are Ruthenian 1 is Polish. The agricultural secretary and secretary treasurer are English. The English minority control only by playing on the inter-racial jealousies of others, and retain that control by devices which depend upon the ignorance of the non-English. It is impossible to secure continuous policies under the conditions under which self-government obtains.

Within the municipality is found one Grain Growers' Association with about a score of members. There exists no newspaper, no nurse, no veterinary surgeon, no doctor, no Protestant church, no co-operative elevator, no practicing lawyer, no homemakers' club, no hospital, no creamery, no printing establishment and practically no telephones. Though two lines of railway run through the territory, a main and branch line, only one station agent and one bank are located in this district. One Polish and one Greek priest are resident within the bounds of the municipality. One hotel and one eating

house provide accommodation for the traveller. There are six villages, and five groups of community Doukhobors and three villages of Independent Doukhobors.

The problem that confronts us in this municipality is that of Canadianising the Doukhobors and Ruthenians. Let us first briefly compare these peoples. Both are Slavs. The Doukhobors came heralded from afar and feted from Halifax to Winnipeg; the Ruthenian came, only he himself knows how. In an economic sense both can be said to have succeeded. As one finds them the Doukhobor is personally clean, the Ruthenians and Bukovinians stand in greater need of the bath and of ventilation. The Ruthenian is an intense individualist. Of the Doukhobours there are two classes, the Community Doukhobors whose communities exhibit plain signs of disintegrating, and the Independent Doukhobors, good farmers and energetic, but in a certain proneness to drinking and slickness showing evidence of the removal of moral restraints. At the present moment the Community Doukhobor is no political force, but the Ruthenian is of tremendous significance. The Ruthenian and Bukovinian remember the government from which they secured their land patents, and the association in their own land of the word "Liberal" and are therefore, as a political candidate chuckled to me, "naturally Liberal." The Ruthenian regards every office holder as a grafter, the Bukovinian is less suspicious, the Independent Doukhobors more reckless. The Independent Doukhobors won't co-operate readily, the Bukovinian and Ruthenian are suspicious and jealous.

Wherein lies the hope of Canadianising these people? I say with great solemnity that the churches, apart from a hospital which one denomination has equipped, have made no contribution towards their Canadianisation in the district where I studied. Only three families read Canadian newspapers in English. The Ruthenian newspapers have, in general, been pronouncedly nationalist in tone, and, I am informed by one who knows the Ruthenians of this province better than any other man, a Ruthenian paper could not exist without being strongly nationalist. In fact one of the best known of the Ruthenian papers had to be sold to Ruthenians not long since because another paper kept insisting that it itself was more purely nationalist and was not controlled by "French hirelings." There

is no hope of Canadianising these people through the papers which most of them read.

The hope of Canadianising these people lies in the public school. Within the municipality under consideration there are 17 public schools, of which 14 are summer schools. The work of Canadianising is evidently not a work for the winter. Of 10 schools for which information was obtainable, the school enrollment was 436, made up as follows:—

Galicians.....	208
Bukovinians.....	121
Ruthenians.....	329
Doukhobors	86
English.....	16
Germans.....	4
Belgians.....	1
Total.....	436

In several cases there were no schools for nearly a decade after settlement. At the present moment no school whatever is attended by any of the Community Doukhobors. Among the results which I secured from my investigations were the following:—

1. In 8 out of 14 summer schools the teachers are Ruthenian.

2. In the schools where teachers are Ruthenians, Ruthenian is frequently taught the last period of the day, though there is now no provision in the law for this practice.

3. Most schools have pupils only in the first three grades.

4. In the earlier grades at least some teachers use Ruthenian as a medium to explain English.

5. In schools where the teacher is English there is evidence of greater advance being made by pupils in the mastery of the English language.

6. The Ruthenian teachers have seldom the qualifications that would fit them to teach in other schools in the province.

7. In the Canora Inspectorate there are 25 Ruthenian teachers whom the inspector grades as follows:

Good.....	6
Fair.....	10
Poor.....	9

8. The Community Doukhobors are opposed to schools; and the Independent Doukhobours are indifferent. The parents of all are inclined to keep their children home somewhat too readily to assist in the work of the farm.

9. The school building and its equipment are generally good.

10. The difficulty of securing accommodation for the teacher has made it necessary to erect shacks in connection with six schools visited.

11. The official trustee secures greater efficiency in school and equipment and also honesty and economy in administration.

12. In one school last year the number on the roll was 12, the average attendance 8. The trustees returned this year were all English. They appointed the teacher truant officer. He proceeded to enforce the law and had an arrest made. The result is an average attendance this year of 47, and the number on the roll now 59, made up as follows:

44 Independent Doukhobors.
13 English.
1 Belgian.
1 Ruthenian.

Total 59

13. School gardens through the efforts of the agricultural secretary and the teachers have proved very successful in stimulating the interest of pupils and teachers. This agricultural secretary appointed for 1915 engaged in the following activities:

- (a) Promotion of school gardening.
- (b) Stamping out of contagious diseases.
- (c) Fostering of co-operative buying.
- (d) Weed control.
- (e) Arranging addresses on Better Farming.
- (f) Organisation of Municipal Fair for children.
- (g) Arranging to take boys to the Provincial Competition, Regina.

The work of this agricultural secretary and of the teachers—especially the school gardens, the sports, and the municipal fair—apart from the direct teaching of English, was the most hopeful signs of real progress being made towards Canadianising the people of the municipality. There were manifest two defects in the position of the Agricultural secretary:

1. The combination of the coercive with the educative. The official who is trying to win to Better Farming and to stimulate school gardening should not be forced to have in charge weed control.

2. Insecure tenure of office owing to predominance of non-English on council.

THE DOUKHOBOR PROBLEM

BEFORE concluding our discussion of the Country School in non-English speaking communities, I

should like to make certain observations regarding the Doukhobor problem and then to direct your attention to the pressing character of the problem of educating the Ruthenians.

The Doukhobors

The independent Doukhobors have begun to send their children to school. They have thrown off internationalism, communism and vegetarianism. They are in an attitude to learn Canadian ideals and to take on a Canadian outlook. They need no special treatment beyond the constant pressure of the educational authorities to see that their children are kept at school.

It is the Community Doukhobors who constitute the educational problem. In this connection we should bear in mind the following considerations:

1. Before the arrival of Peter Verigin some at least did send their children to schools.

2. The Doukhobors are peculiarly apt at making almost anything with their hands. This may have arisen from the Russian custom of sending every peasant to learn some trade during half the year. Something in the nature of a manual labor department might be a commencement towards solving the problem.

3. The Doukhobors are very observant of natural phenomena, and, though those in the Community are poor farmers, they are splendid gardeners. If only for the Doukhobor women, who are the gardeners among them, I believe that the school garden might be found an avenue of contact.

4. The Doukhobors do appreciate the value of training.—“The system of education among the Doukhobors,” writes Elkington, “is simple and uniform. As soon as the child begins to speak and understand, his parents begin verbally to teach him prayers and psalms, and to tell him something out of the Scriptures; and they thus continue to instruct their children in Christian doctrine. These little Doukhobors very early accompany their elders to the gatherings for religious expression, where they take their part in reciting such prayers and psalms as they have learned. Owing to such education, which also embraces teaching some useful way of working with their hands, the spirit of the parents passes by degrees into the children.” And Aylmer Maude thus writes—“With reference to their children I think anyone who has seen how obedient, considerate,

and quick to be of use the Doukhobor children usually are, will be inclined to admit that most of us have much to learn from these people on the subject of education. Even regarding instruction (as apart from education proper), their knowledge of agriculture and of useful handicrafts, coupled with a serious attention to religion as a guide to daily life, are more likely to help them live useful and happy lives than any knowledge of vulgar fractions or of the eccentricities of English orthography."

5. For a century the Doukhobors suffered persecution and even martyrdom for conscience' sake at the hands of rulers. One of the reasons why they have disintegrated is that they have not suffered persecution in this country. The Doukhobor believes he is discharging his highest duty when he is experiencing some form of torture. Coercion as a policy might tend merely to delay the disintegrating forces.

6. Although Communism is of recent origin, yet the *Mir* or village group is a unique Slavonic institution of great antiquity. And some light might be shed on the problem if it could be ascertained how schools were introduced into the Russian *Mir*.

Firmness Necessary

What then is to be done with the Community Doukhobor? I shall not venture to say. But I do venture to say we cannot continue to have 1100 people in northeastern Saskatchewan floating Canadian ideals and institutions. Their customs have become their conscience. In this particular case I do not believe that their conscience, unless indeed their conscience and Peter Verigin, are to be taken as synonymous, has given rise to their attitude towards the schools. With the introduction of schools goes Peter Verigin's influence, and though there are some phases of that influence that are not without benefit to the Doukhobors, it is this conviction that leads me to urge the Government to act with firm sympathy. With sympathy, of course, but I insist, with *firmness* too. Their children will rise up and call us blessed.

THE RUTHENIANS

THERE are, I believe, about 60,000 Ruthenians in this Province, or roughly speaking one in every 12 of our population. There are 200 schools in which the Ruthen-

ians form the majority, and of these between 75 and 80 are taught by Ruthenians themselves. Of the teachers 5 are from Manitoba College, 2 are from the University of Saskatchewan, about 60 from the training school at Regina, and the rest from other places. About 4 in all have second class, non-professional certificates, and only 2 have professional certificates. During the last three years there has been a distinct improvement in the use of the English language as a means of teaching English in the primary grades. But a considerable number, say from 1-5 to 1-4, use Ruthenian as a means of teaching English in the primary grades. And generally Ruthenian is taught the last period of the school day, though the law at present makes no provision for such instruction.

The Ukrainian Movement

Ruthenians are now serving as school trustees, not always with distinction. They are Councillors of Rural Municipalities. They have special supervisors and organisers for their schools. One of their number was recently elected a member of the Manitoba Legislature. They are intensely interested in politics. Their newspapers are strongly nationalistic Ukrainian in tone. For the moment, owing to the war, the Ukrainian movement hides its head. But it is here, and must be grappled with. A year or two ago the Ruthenian teachers of Manitoba convened in Winnipeg passed the following resolution:

"We Ruthenians, the whole body of Ruthenian-English teachers in the Province of Manitoba are in heartiest sympathy with the bi-lingual system of schools and we consider it our sacred duty to champion our natural rights to our mother tongue and we will always hold the position that our language should be taught in our schools with English." About the same time the Ruthenian bishop in addressing a German convention declared:—"For us foreign-born Canadians it is of the utmost importance that we do not slide away too fast from old traditions and especially is it necessary to guard the language. Experience has taught us that the mother-tongue is the one in which the children should be taught religion. If we do not keep our nationality we are traitors to the new land.

An Unhappy History

The Ruthenian has had an unhappy history. They are an offshoot of the Little Russians of the Ukraine, and together with them were known as Rus-

sians when those to whom today we give that name were called simply Muscovites. To them belongs Kiev, the cradle of early Russian Christianity. From them even the Muscovites received their earliest civilization. The Little Russians are a brave race, brave and independent. When all Eastern and Middle Europe trembled before the advance of the Turkish hordes they sped their little flat-bottomed boats down their loved Dnieper to the Black Sea and ravaged the coast towns of the dread Turks. They have stood for liberty. While the Slavs of the north, the Great Russians have exhibited a tendency to aggregation and national unity, the Little Russians of the Ukraine have exhibited a tendency to dispersion and independence. T. Hart Davies has translated for us the *Confession of Nalevaiko*, a chief of the Ukraine, by Rylaef—
 "Try not with threats my soul to shake,
 Persuasive words no change can make,
 For hell to me is to have viewed
 My loved Ukraine in servitude;
 To see my fatherland set free
 This, this alone, is heaven for me."

In 1654 all Little Russia under its leader, Bogdan Chmelnitski, submitted to the Tsar Alexis. (Sienkiewicz describes this in *With Fire and Sword*). All Little Russia, but not all Little Russians. There are Little Russians today that are not of Little Russia or the Ukraine. They are the Ruthenians of Galicia, Bukovina and districts in the north east of Hungary. Poor Ruthenian of Galicia! For centuries now you have not belonged to yourself. Russia has had you. Poland has had you. Austria has had you. For the second time since the war began Lemberg has fallen. During the past year Russia has held you and now, devastated by war, Austria or the Teutonic Alliance has once more its grip of you. You have rarely known the joys of peace. Placed in the middle of Europe between countries that have for centuries picked quarrels with each other, it has been your fate to be in the thick of it. What does western Europe not owe you and your little brother of the Ukraine! For centuries you were the quickest hedge between Asia and Europe beating back the wild hordes of Mongols. You bore devastation while other more fortunate nations beyond that living hedge developed and prospered.

The Ruthenians are among the poorest and most backward of the Austro-Hungarian races. Very few indeed have risen above the ranks of the peasantry.

Both politically and economically they are under an alien yoke. The feudal principalities which they constitute fell to Lithuania. This in turn passed to Poland. At the partition of Poland in 1772 they passed to Austria. It is the same with economic relations, a story of subjection. In Galicia the vast majority of the land owners, of the middle and upper classes, are Poles. By these the Ruthenians have been as thoroughly despised and feared as they have been systematically plundered and oppressed by the Jews. The poverty of the Ruthenians has been largely due to the extreme subdivision of their holdings, their want of education and the dominating and domineering policy of other races.

They Love Their Language

Their language the Ruthenians have always regarded as their treasure. It was the attempt on the part of the Poles to extirpate their language that threw the Little Russians in the arms of the Muscovite Tsar. Although they form nearly half the population of Galicia and Bukovina instruction in the schools has rarely been obtainable except through the hated Polish language. The matter of language has constituted a difficult problem for Austria. She has been under the constant necessity of trimming between her races. Sometimes this operates to the advantage of the Ruthenians, but this has happened but seldom. It occurred, however, in 1840 when the Poles were in violent opposition to the Government. The government began to favor the Ruthenians and actually introduced Ruthenian into the primary schools in place of Polish. They even published at Vienna a series of text books and a newspaper in Ruthenian. The Ruthenian deputies who came up in their peasants' dress to vote unanimously for the government were greatly feted. This lasted till the Ruthenians acquired a taste for reading books other than the text books prescribed, especially books from across the Russian frontiers. There was a prompt return to the old repressive methods. The Cyrillian alphabet was prohibited and all Ruthenian books were issued with the Russian type.

The Ruthenian has been constantly despoiled in his own home and exploited in his own country. In his breast were planted the seeds of economic and social discontent. When the story of the new lands across the sea, lands of fresh hopes and splendid opportunities, reached his ears he was ready to respond.

Migration to United States

It was in 1879-80 that the Slav migration to the United States commenced. From the slopes of the Carpathian mountains they came at the call of the coal companies and iron masters of Pennsylvania. The movement continued till now more than one-half million Ruthenians are in the United States. The most interesting features of the Ruthenian settlement in the United States are:—

(1) The Apostolic letter *Ea Semper* which defined the general constitution of the Greek rite in America has been regarded by many Ruthenians as an attack upon their Slavic nationality and the Eastern Rite. 10,000 Ruthenians went over to the Russian church in protest at what they regarded as an attempt at latinization. Though *Ea Semper* weakened the Ruthenian bishop's position by making him an auxiliary to the Latin bishop, yet, what was looked upon as an attack upon his rights has tended to make him a rallying centre of a Ruthenian movement.

(2) The Ruthenians have exhibited a tendency to bring their national home policies and politics to America.

(3) The Ruthenians have shown a proneness to combine into federations or unions ("bratstva") each of which gives strong expression to its point of view through the press, generally through weekly newspapers of their own.

The Movement to Canada

The first Ruthenians came to Canada in 1894, nine families in all and settled near Star, not far from Edmonton. The movement, however, did not get under way till 1897, and almost 40,000 had come before the end of the century. The Ruthenians have made no striking appeal to the imagination. They have been neither martyrs for their faith, vegetarians communists nor passive resisters. They have been willing to eat meat and hold property. They have learned to help themselves and to accommodate themselves to Western conditions. They have shown a desire to secure for their children the educational advantages that have been offered. Many, however, wish the first steps in that education to be taken under teachers who know Ruthenian, and, therefore have been eager to employ teachers with an inadequate acquaintance with the English language. The lines of the development of Ruthenian life in Canada are in many instances not unlike that development in the United States. One fact stands out with tremendous clear-

ness—the Ruthenians have become a force. Not in this Province alone but throughout the prairies. They have control of school districts, they dictate the policy in more than one Rural Municipality, they have entered the Legislature of Manitoba, and are knocking at the doors of the Legislative Assemblies of other Provinces. As school trustees they frequently get the affairs of the school districts in a frightful mess, as Rural Councillors they have not exhibited any great administrative genius. And yet they have an aptitude for political agitation. There is little doubt that there are potent forces in the west of a strongly nationalistic character that stand ready to exploit the Ruthenians.

Political Aspirations

A despatch from Winnipeg under date of July 24th, 1915, says—

"A central political organisation has been formed in Winnipeg, and has as its aims to organise its branches and departments in the very near future throughout the district inhabited by Ruthenian Ukrainian people in Manitoba, and later on in Saskatchewan and Alberta. "The lack of such organisation has been painfully felt in the past," says a circular issued, "but especially by Ruthenian-Ukrainians themselves, as on account of such a state of affairs existing there have not been clear political ideas, and from this, quasi politicians drew advantages of all kinds through their persistency in the bartering of their own people to one or the other party, entailing disgrace for the whole nation. It is ended now, and from now on the Ruthenians will act in their political life as an organised body."

The following persons were elected to the executive of the Ukrainian Political club:

John Marciniw, president; Emil Orobko, vice-president; N. Hladky, secretary; M. Hawryluk, vice-secretary; J. Zarowsky, treasurer.

Directors—J. Zawidowsky, M. Burka, P. Humniecky, T. Kozachenko, N. Feschyn, J. Scherbaniewich.

Board of Control—W. Sinowsky, Stef. Komavensky, J. Yaworsky, Alex. Ksionsyk, administrator; S. Medwid, librarian.

Under such circumstances it behooves us to look carefully to the education of the Ruthenians. About 8000 are in our public schools. It would be desirable to have the teacher in every Ruthenian school thoroughly Canadian. That may

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not be possible. But have we not the duty at this juncture to consider the wisdom or unwisdom of the policy of a separate Training School or course for Ruthenian teachers and the rather generous granting of Provisional Permits. Let every Ruthenian who has taken our regular course in our regular public and high schools and is duly qualified have the amplest opportunity to teach. But I insist we cannot afford to have short cuts and special devices open to the non-English and I say this in the interests and for the sake of the non-English. Though their children speak with the tongue of Ruthenians and of angels and have not been touched with Canadian ideals and have not mastered the English language, our system of education profiteth us nothing. We welcome every gift of genius, every grace of culture, every refinement of spirit, but we want neither the German language nor a Ukrainian movement erected as a barrier to prevent them exerting their influence in our midst.

The Way Out

The way out of our difficulties lies not in making concessions. A larger administrative unit with greater regard to municipal boundaries, a system of medical inspection in rural districts a uniform treatment of all non-English languages in our schools, a strict enforcement of the regulations governing the teaching of non-English languages, the employment of the direct instead of the indirect method even in the primary grades, some substantial encouragement to the work of school-gardening and school fairs; the levying of school rates even on section in unorganised districts—why should there be over 40 sections untaxed within a stone's throw of the City of Saskatoon?—a complete survey of conditions in rural communities, and, finally, the one dominating policy of making Canadian citizens here on the prairies—I commend these matters to you as a programme of reform.

I wish to read you a simple, but eloquent, little letter written by a young

lad, just 10 months out from Sweden. He learned English by the direct method. He makes only one mistake in spelling—the word “ski,” and for all I know, he may be giving it in the Swedish form.

East Mount School,

21st December, 1914

Dear Sir,—

I was born in Sweden on the first of February, 1903. I came to Canada the 28th of February of this year. My name is Olov Albin Norlander. I live with my uncle, Andrew Olson, on a farm near Earl Grey, half a mile from East Mount School. When I came to school first I started in the first class. So I have gone right through the Primer, First and Second Readers and am now in the third. I did not know any English at all when I arrived in Canada. I had learned what Yes and No meant on board the ship we came by. My mother and three brothers and I sailed with the Alsatian from Liverpool. I did not like Canada very well at first, but now that I can speak and write English I would not care to go back to Sweden. We lived in the north of Sweden, but it was never as cold there as here, though we had sleighs and snowshoes and skis in winter. If you want any carving in wood, early in 1915 I think I can do one or two little things. I will close.

Yours respectfully,

OLE NORLANDER.”

It is my conviction, fellow citizens, that Olov Albin Norlander is already a good Canadian citizen. And he has given in one sentence an essential element in the secret of citizenship on these prairies “Now that I can speak and write English I would not care to go back to Sweden.”

Mr. Chairman, I beg leave to move the following resolution:—

“That the Citizens’ Committee on Public Education convened at Regina on Sept. 22nd, 1915, place itself in record as endorsing the policy of seeing that every child on leaving school should be at least able to read, write and speak English.”

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OLIVER, EH

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